



Child Care Management / Creating Learning Spaces

Creating a Positive Environment



Dear Debi,

I'm expecting my first child in a month. I am so excited, but I'm also nervous since I'm new to all this. Any tips on how I can create a positive and safe environment in my home for my baby?

– **Liz Schneider**

Debi's Tips



Debi Gutierrez

Host

- Calm, cozy & comfortable sets the mood
- A nurturing environment embraces kids at their level
- A positive environment sets kids up to succeed

Expert Advice



Su Livingston

Early childhood
education instructor

All learning and exploring is positive and nurturing. The environment needs to encourage children's development. It's how children feel positive and confident about their sense of self and their individual accomplishments. Their space needs to provide a balance of challenge, risk and safety.

A positive environment should have expressive materials like paint, drawing materials, and dough or clay. The space should include open-ended materials that can be used in many different ways, so children can pretend, invent and create. Sensory experiences are also very nurturing and soothing for kids' emotions. Water play, sand play, play dough, pouring materials – they all allow release of frustration. Construction materials, like building blocks, are also important and help develop a child's fine and gross motor skills.

The environment needs to be based on the whole child: socially, emotionally, cognitively, and physically. This approach looks at the environment as a whole through the child's eye. Ask yourself, "Are there materials so that the child can express his feelings? Are the materials challenging enough? Are there opportunities for fine and gross motor development?" Here are some useful tips:

- Organization – Can the child "read" the environment to make sense of it? Is the space clear or chaotic? Labels or pictures help the child keep the environment orderly, which fosters independence in the child.
- Aesthetics – Is there color, texture, soft materials? Not just primary colors. Having a wide range of colors and materials is more likely to appeal to children and will enable

them to gain more intelligence about their world.

- Adaptability – Can the space or materials move and change to reflect the child’s current development, interests?

Creating a positive environment also means giving a child individual attention and respect by acknowledging the child. Acknowledgement is more than simply complimenting the child. An adult can compliment a child by saying, “I love your art.” Acknowledgement, however, is when an adult takes notice of what a child has done, and says, “Look, you can do that now!”

Child Care provider Comments



Darlene Morales

Mother of one

When creating a positive environment for the child make sure you have a safe and welcoming home. Make sure your house is child-proof in the kitchen, bathroom, and bedrooms. Keep a clean environment not only for health reasons, but also because staying clutter-free will help you from feeling overwhelmed. Play classical music to create a peaceful environment for both yourself and the baby.



Cathy Agnew

Cares for her grandchildren, mother of two

To create a nurturing environment at home, we spend a lot of time together singing songs and playing together. I sit on the porch swing and teach them about their environment when we’re outside. It provides them the opportunity to explore their surroundings, ask questions and talk. There’s just a lot of love in our home for them in everything we do.



Clarissa August

Family child care provider for 21 years

Liz should read to the baby since the baby is connecting with the mother’s voice. I also recommend holding your infant a lot, exercising their bodies, arms and legs. Finally, talk to your infant to encourage language development.

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